



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION POLICY PROJECT

Greetings from Smart Growth America! People Want "Smarter Growth," But What the Heck Is It?

by **Don Chen**

Director, Smart Growth America

For the past few years, "smart growth" has become a popular rallying cry—so much so that it's hard to find anyone who's against it. But if the promise of smart growth is to be fulfilled, we need to be more specific about what its implementation really means.

For this reason, a new nationwide coalition called Smart Growth America commissioned a national poll to test public support for specific policies to implement smart growth. We found that 78 percent of those surveyed said they favored the concept of smart growth. More importantly, when asked about specific policies, people overwhelmingly favored the environmental, community development and transportation measures needed to make smart growth happen.

The poll shows strong support for ensuring that growth is fair and equitable. Two-thirds of respondents said they would support requirements to make at least 15 percent of units in new residential developments affordable for moderate and low-income families. Eighty-one percent favored the creation of incentives and low-interest loans to revitalize economically depressed communities. On the green side, 83 percent of people polled said they supported the creation of open space zones that would be off-limits to development.

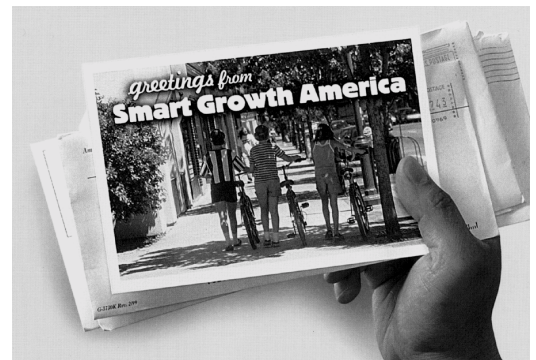
The transportation questions were posed as tough choices and still yielded evidence of strong support for smarter growth. People were asked if they favored state funding to improve public transit, even if it meant less money for new highways. Sixty percent said yes. A similarly phrased "trade-off" question about providing pedestrian facilities for kids walking to school got 77 percent support. We also asked people what they believe is the most effective long-term solution to managing congestion. The largest number of Americans—47 percent—believe that public transportation is the best strategy. Next was developing communities where less driving was needed according to 28 percent. Last came road building, with only 21 percent support.

Critics will say that Americans support public transit only if someone else is taking it. But that job has been weakened by trends showing growth in public transit ridership far outstripping growth in driving over the past four years. They will also say that Americans prefer sprawl, but real estate trends are changing—homebuyers are increasingly choosing walkable and transit-oriented communities exemplified by "New Urban" developments. In fact, analysts have warned investors against backing sprawl developments because of doubts of their viability.

So what the heck is smart growth? These trends show that Americans already know. They want more choices in places to live and ways to get around; and they don't want to see things they value—historic buildings, open space, scenic vistas—get destroyed in the process. This issue of *Progress* summarizes our findings on Americans' attitudes towards growth issues. And what we found is that Americans want smart growth, and they want it now.

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For more information, see www.smartgrowthamerica.com.



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Transportation Appropriations Bill Passed, All TCSP Funds Earmarked

Lawmakers approved the transportation spending bill for FY2001 this October, providing \$30.7 billion in funds for highways and \$6.3 billion for transit as guaranteed by TEA-21. \$3 billion in general fund spending was added for highway projects, including \$600 million for the controversial Woodrow Wilson bridge project in the Washington, DC region.

The \$6.3 billion in funds for transit includes \$2.646 billion in capital investment grants, of which \$1.058 billion is for new starts, \$1.058 billion for fixed guideway modernization, and \$529 million for buses and bus facilities. The Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) program is funded at \$50 million—all of which was earmarked for projects that vary in quality.

The Access to Jobs program is funded at the guaranteed level of \$100 million, although \$50 million less than as requested by the Federal Transit Administration. \$73 million in Job Access and Reverse Commute grants for FY2000 were recently announced.

For more information on the transportation appropriations bill, visit <http://www.senate.gov>. For details on FY2000 Job Access program, visit <http://www.fta.dot.gov>.

High Speed Rail Investment Act Added to Community Renewal Bill

On 10/3, a bill was introduced in the Senate Finance Committee to provide tax incentives for distressed areas and for other purposes, including the purchase of Amtrak bonds. S. 3152, the Community Renewal and New Markets Act, would authorize \$10 billion in tax credit bonds for Amtrak to develop high-speed rail corridors over the next 10 years.

Based largely on the High Speed Rail Investment Act of 2000, which was originally sponsored last year by Senator Lautenberg (D-NJ), the rail component of the legislation would allow states to place 20 percent of the federal bond amount in a fund. States would pay off the bonds through proceeds generated by investing the funds via an independent trustee.

The community renewal bill enjoys bipartisan support from 32 Senators, including nearly the entire Senate Finance Committee. The High Speed Rail Investment Act is also supported by 222 lawmakers, 19 state transportation departments who have formed States for Passenger Rail and more than 20 major newspapers.

For more information on the S. 3152, visit <http://www.senate.gov>. For information on high speed rail, visit <http://lautenberg.senate.gov/highspeed/>

Brownfields Bill Garners Support in the Senate

This June, Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) introduced a bill that would provide federal funds for cleaning up brownfields. S. 2700, the Brownfields Revitalization and Environmental Restoration Act of 2000, would authorize \$150 million annually for grants to local, state and tribal governments to inventory, assess and cleanup contaminated brownfield sites. \$50 million per year will also be allocated to states to improve their cleanup programs. Funds could be used to “recycle” brownfields into urban parks and waterfronts through grants or possibly a Revolving Loan program.

The bill currently has the support of 66 sponsors and organizations such as STPP, Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, and the US Conference of Mayors. Several environmental groups, however, including the US Public Interest Research Group and the Sierra Club, have criticized the bill because it allows some polluters to no longer be held liable for cleaning up sites.

For details on the bill, visit <http://www.senate.gov>.

New Environmental Bill: Streamlining or Steamrolling?

This October, Senator Bob Smith (R-NH), Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, introduced a bill that would delay federal rules that assure public information about the health, environment, and equity impacts of road projects. S. 3173, the Environmental Streamlining Improvement Act, would prevent the US Department of Transportation (DOT) from moving forward on environmental review and transportation planning regulations until May, 2001. Sponsors are expected to attach the bill as a rider to unrelated legislation before the Congressional session ends.

Instead of sacrificing the public's right-to-know, organizations such as Environmental Defense has suggested that DOT strengthen environmental streamlining rules by setting a “national mobility goal” to measure progress on providing equal access to jobs, health and education services for all Americans.

For more information on the “national mobility goal” effort, contact Michael Replogle at Environmental Defense at mreplogle@environmentaldefense.org

Public Comments for Planning and Streamlining Posted On-Line

In other streamlining news, the period to comment on two proposed regulations governing the planning and environmental streamlining process ended on 9/23. 377 comments are now posted on DOT's website.

To read the comments, type in the docket number 5933 at <http://dms.dot.gov/search/>

So, What Is Smart Growth?

Editors' Note: This article is excerpted from the new *Smart Growth America* report, "Greetings from Smart Growth America."

We define smart growth according to its outcomes—outcomes that mirror the basic values of most Americans. Smart growth is growth that helps to achieve these six goals:

1. Neighborhood Livability The central goal of any smart growth plan is the quality of the neighborhoods where we live. They should be safe, convenient, attractive and affordable. Sprawl development too often forces trade-offs between these goals. Some neighborhoods are safe but not convenient. Others are convenient but not affordable. Too many affordable neighborhoods are not safe. Careful planning can help bring all these elements together.

2. Better Access, Less Traffic One of the major downfalls of sprawl is traffic. By putting jobs, homes and other destinations far apart and requiring a car for every trip, sprawl makes everyday tasks a chore. Smart growth's emphasis on mixing land uses, clustering development, and providing multiple transportation choices helps us manage congestion, pollute less and save energy. Those who want to drive can, but people who would rather not drive everywhere or don't own a car have other choices.

3. Thriving Cities, Suburbs and Towns Smart growth puts the needs of existing communities first. By guiding development to already built-up areas, money for investments in transportation, schools, libraries and other public services can go to the communities where people live today. This is especially important for neighborhoods that have inadequate public services and low levels of private investment. It is also critical for preserving what makes so many places special—attractive buildings, historic districts and cultural landmarks.

4. Shared Benefits Sprawl leaves too many people behind. Divisions by income and race have allowed some areas to prosper while others languish. As basic needs such as jobs, education and health care become less plentiful in some communities, residents have diminishing opportunities to participate in their regional economy. Smart growth enables all residents to be beneficiaries of prosperity.

5. Lower Costs, Lower Taxes Sprawl costs money. Opening up green space to new development means that the cost of new schools, roads, sewer lines, and water supplies will be borne by residents throughout metro areas. Sprawl also means families have to

own more cars and drive them further. This has made transportation the second highest category of household spending, just behind shelter. Smart growth helps on both fronts. Taking advantage of existing infrastructure keeps taxes down. And where convenient transportation choices enable families to rely less on driving, there's more money left over for other things, like buying a home or saving for college.

6. Keeping Open Space Open. By focusing development in already built-up areas, smart growth preserves rapidly vanishing natural treasures. From forests and farms to wetlands and wildlife, smart growth lets us pass on to our children the landscapes we love. Communities are demanding more parks that are conveniently located and bring recreation within reach of more people. People are also beginning to realize that protecting natural resources will provide healthier air and cleaner drinking water.

And, Who is Smart Growth America?

Smart Growth America is a new nationwide coalition of sixty organizations promoting a better way to grow; one that protects farmland and open space, revitalizes neighborhoods, keeps housing affordable, and makes communities more livable. This coalition was created to sharpen the focus of national advocacy for smart growth, to coordinate activities between national and regional organizations, and to work with public officials and the private sector to ensure that growth is balanced, fair and responsive to the public.

Smart Growth America's members represent advocacy organizations that have a stake in better growth decisions. They include environmental groups, organizations working to achieve social justice and equity, farmland and open space conservation groups, community development organizations, historic and scenic preservation groups, housing affordability advocates, statewide coalitions, transportation activists, architects, developers and public officials. The coalition is currently staffed by the Surface Transportation Policy Project, with Don Chen as its Director and Roy Kienitz as the Chair of its Steering Committee.

In the coming year, Smart Growth America will focus on policy development, research and communications to promote its work. For further information about the coalition, its steering committee and members and its first report, *Greetings from Smart Growth America*, visit us on the World Wide Web at www.smartgrowthamerica.com or contact us at:

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Results from the National Survey on Growth and Land Development September 2000

Has traffic in your area gotten better, worse or stayed about the same over the last three years?

Gotten better.....4%
GOTTEN WORSE.....54%
About the same.....37%
Don't know/refused.....4%

Do you agree that it is better to have land-use planning to guide the place and size of development in your county or area, or that people and industry should be allowed to build wherever they want?

SUPPORT LAND USE PLANNING....78%
Allow to build.....17%
Don't know/refused.....5%

Is there a need to do more or to do less to manage and plan for new growth and development in your state?

DO MORE.....76%
Do less.....13%
Don't know/refused.....12%

Which of the following proposals is the best long term solution to reducing traffic in your state?

Build new roads.....21%
IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.....47%
DEVELOP WALKABLE COMMUNITIES.....28%
Don't know/refused.....4%

Would you favor or oppose smart growth policies in your state?

FAVOR.....78%
Oppose.....16%
Don't know/refused.....4%

How much confidence do you have in each of the following to make the best decisions on land use issues affecting your area?

	Great deal of Confidence	Some	Not very Much	Very Little	Don't Know/ Refuse
Private developers	6%	29%	24%	37%	4%
Your city or town government	12%	49%	14%	21%	4%
Your county government	7%	54%	15%	20%	4%
Your state government	8%	54%	15%	21%	3%
The federal government	6%	40%	21%	31%	3%
Neighborhood associations and civic groups	20%	47%	12%	15%	6%

Interviewing conducted by Belden, Russonello & Stewart on September 7-10, 2000. Sample size is 1,007 adults 18 years old or older. Margin of sampling error is ± 3.1 percentage points. Data have been weighted by gender, age, region and race. Percents may add to 99% or 101% due to rounding.

Do you favor or oppose the following proposals on development and land use policy?

	Favor		Oppose		Don't Know/ Refused
	Strongly	Somewhat	Strongly	Somewhat	
Increase coordinated efforts among towns to plan for growth	46%	39%	6%	4%	5%
Have state government give funding priority to maintain services, such as schools and roads, in existing communities rather than to encourage development in the countryside.	47%	34%	8%	6%	5%
Establish zones for green space, farming, and forests outside of existing cities and suburbs that would be off-limits to developers.	56%	27%	8%	6%	3%
Require that all new housing developments built in your state include at least 15% of housing for moderate and low-income families.	32%	34%	17%	13%	4%
Have government provide tax credits and low-interest loans for people to revitalize cities, suburbs and rural communities that are not doing so well economically.	41%	40%	9%	8%	3%
Have government use tax dollars to buy land for more parks and open space and to protect wildlife.	46%	31%	10%	11%	3%
Have your state government use more of its transportation budget for improvements in public transportation, such as trains, buses and light rail, even if this means less money to build new highways.	29%	31%	21%	15%	5%
Use part of the state transportation budget to create more sidewalks and stop signs in communities, to make it safer and easier for children to walk to school, even if this means less money to build new highways.	47%	30%	12%	7%	3%
Provide tax credits and low-interest loans for people to rehabilitate historic houses and revitalize neighborhoods in cities and older suburbs.	44%	35%	11%	7%	5%

Interviewing conducted by Belden, Russonello & Stewart on September 7-10, 2000. Sample size is 1,007 adults 18 years old or older. Margin of sampling error is ± 3.1 percentage points. Data have been weighted by gender, age, region and race. Percents may add to 99% or 101% due to rounding.

Referendum Watch 2000

by Nancy Jakowitsch Surface Transportation Policy Project

This November, communities around the country will be voting on several growth-related ballot initiatives. Unlike in 1998, when voters decided on more than 240 ballot measures to raise funds for local land conservation and other smart growth programs, this year's initiatives deal more with establishing growth management laws at the state level and designating funding sources for new transit systems. Here are a few examples:

Land Use Ballot Measures

Growth Management in Arizona. A proposal to give local governments in Arizona a variety of new growth control tools will go before voters statewide. Proposition 202, the *Citizen's Growth Management Initiative*, requires each of the state's counties and municipalities with at least 2,500 persons to put a growth management plan before local voters. Each such plan would:

"Establish urban growth areas, outside of which new urban developments and services will be limited ...

"Require developers to pay the full cost of additional public facility needs ...

"Protect air and water quality by setting policies and requirements to ensure that growth is consistent with steady progress towards meeting state and federal standards ...

"Set policies and requirements to promote multimodal forms of transportation and ensure that proposals for new roads, additional road lanes, and other transportation elements are evaluated for their urban growth impact before approval."

Another "growth related" referendum will also be on the Arizona ballot. Proposition 100, the *Arizona Conservation Reserve*, would allow up to 3 percent of state trust land to be permanently set aside, rather than being available for possible future sale. Local advocates note that while the measures do not overlap, they may appear to be rival measures since both concern land management. Proposition 100 is believed to be offered this election in attempt to confuse voters.

Proposition 202 is supported by the Sierra Club, the Grand Canyon Trust, and other members of Arizona's Citizens for Growth Management (www.prop202yes.com/) and is opposed by Arizonans for Responsible Growth (see [www.planarizona.org.](http://www.planarizona.org/)) A recent statewide poll showed 62 percent of respondents supporting the measure.

Growth Management in Colorado. A citizen-sponsored initiative called the *Responsible Growth Initiative* will go before Colorado voters. According to its supporters, Amendment 24 would:

Assure Local Voter Approval of New Development. Cities and counties would be called upon to prepare maps of outlying areas where future development is expected, and outline the location and general densities and uses of the land. These plans would be submitted to local voters for approval before construction is allowed in currently undeveloped areas.

Assure Public Disclosure Of The Impacts Of New Development. Cities and counties would describe to voters the projected impacts of the new development, including its costs and effect on traffic, schools, open space, air quality and emergency services.

Promote Responsible Growth. Development would only be allowed in areas where localities can afford the costs of new roads, water and sewer systems within a ten-year period.

The measure's sponsors, including the Colorado Public Interest Research Group, the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association, and the League of Women Voters of Colorado, collected 103,000 signatures in favor of placing the measure before the voters, 40,000 more than was required. Opponents have raised more than \$5.2 million to fight Amendment 24, breaking the record for the most money raised in a Colorado ballot initiative campaign. A recent poll found more than 60 percent of voters surveyed supporting the measure. For more details, visit www.voteyes24.com/.

Attacks on Smart Growth in Oregon. Two ballot measures in Oregon threaten to undermine the state's landmark growth management practices. *Measure 7* would amend the state constitution to require the public to compensate property owners whenever a regulation reduces a property's value. This means that tax money could be used to pay landowners to obey zoning rules, air and water pollution safeguards, building codes and other widely accepted health and safety standards. Opponents of the measure estimate that it would cost taxpayers hundreds of millions or dollars each year. Similar measures were proposed in Washington and Arizona in 1995 and 1996 and were defeated.

Oregon voters will also decide on an initiative that would complicate the process of enforcing existing planning and environmental laws. *Measure 2* would require any state regulation to be held in abeyance if a sufficient number of

signatures are submitted to state government. The regulation could only be enforced if it was then specifically approved by a future session of the legislature. This proposal went before Oregon voters in 1998 and was defeated.

Among those opposing *Measure 2* are the Oregon AARP, the Oregon Farm Bureau, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, and 1000 Friends of Oregon. Opponents of this measure fear it would be used to undermine longstanding state growth management regulations. One Oregon newspaper, the *Daily Astorian*, called the 1998 version of this proposal “the Frankenstein of ballot measures.” For more information go to www.friends.org.

Transportation Ballot Measures

Highways First in Washington State. A statewide initiative called I-745 would require 90 percent of transportation funds to be spent on road construction and maintenance. It would also require all local transportation plans to be updated to make road and lane construction the top priority. I-745 would result in major cuts to public transportation programs designed to offer residents alternatives to being stuck in traffic.

The measure is opposed by the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the Washington State Labor Council, the League of Woman Voters, and the American Planning Association. The campaign in favor of the measure is being funded largely by highway construction and asphalt pavement companies and groups. For more information from the proposal’s opponents go to www.no745.org.

Transit In Texas. Voters in the Austin area will decide whether to authorize the regional transit district to proceed with its plan for a 20-mile, \$919 million light rail system. If approved, the measure would not require additional taxes or fees to build the system.

Several groups support the initiative including Get Austin Moving, Light Rail Now and Walkable Neighborhoods, the Real Estate Council of Austin and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. A recent poll showed 59 percent of those surveyed supporting the initiative. For more information go to www.lightrailnow.org.

Rail in Utah. A ¼-cent sales tax will be on the ballot in Salt Lake, Weber and Davis counties in Utah’s Wasatch Front to expand transit services. If approved in all three counties, the measure would provide the Utah Transit Authority with an additional \$43 million a year for a commuter rail line connecting Ogden and Salt Lake City, light rail, and increased bus service. This would complement Salt Lake City’s successful new light rail system.

People for Sensible Transportation, a coalition of 15 community organizations including the Utah AFL-CIO, Salt Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Future Moves Coalition are supporting the transit initiative. Other organizations, however, such as the Utah Taxpayers Association, the AARP, and the Crossroads Urban Center, are opposed to the proposal because it taxes food which disproportionately affects the poor. Still, the local chapter of NAACP supports the measure, noting that the majority of people of color and the poor use public transit to get to work.

Source material for this summary was provided by the Trust for Public Land (www.tpl.org), the Land Trust Alliance (www.lta.org) and the SprawlWatch Clearinghouse (www.sprawlwatch.org.)

Is Sprawl a Good Investment?

Each year two financial research firms, Pricewaterhouse-Coopers LLP and Lend Lease Real Estate Investments Inc., assess the commercial real estate market. Increasingly, they are increasingly warning investors away from suburban office parks and malls, and towards 24-hour districts with a more urban character. The annual report, Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2000, sends this message in unmistakable language:

“Endless traffic lights, intersections, and turning lanes highlight [suburbanites’] frustration as they battle a legacy of poorly conceived infrastructure, abysmal regional planning, and ‘anything goes’ development.”

“Emerging Trends interviewees repeatedly mention infill development...projects as favored investments. ‘We’re going back to the future,’ said an investment management executive. ‘The whole issue of...regenerating the city and the idea of place is finally being accepted by the investor and business community. Today’s poorly conceived suburbs will be the ghettos of the future.’”

“You can still wager on suburban ‘growth path investing’...but it’s a risky play. The boomers’ prime child rearing years are over, and Generation X decidedly prefers the more exciting opportunities offered by big cities...The golden era is over. What remains is a pockmarked suburban landscape, with attractive better-planned communities interspersed among areas destined for eventual obsolescence. Many of these places weren’t built to last.”

“Suburban degeneration is increasing, while 24-hour cities and prime infill locations gain favor...”

Book Review

Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream

Reviewed by Don Chen

About a decade ago, I was just beginning my career as a transportation analyst. My world was cars, fuels, pollution and CAFE standards. Then I happened to see a lecture by Andrés Duany and the landscape suddenly started to look different, now woven together by neighborhoods, narrow streets and sidewalks.

The resonance of Duany's message—and the message of other pioneers of the New Urbanism such as Peter Calthorpe, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Liz Moule, Stefanos Polyzoides and Daniel Solomon—has only gotten stronger. This collection of architects and planners built on the vision of intellectuals like Vincent Scully to call for an end to sprawl-as-usual, and a return to traditional community designs replete with inviting public spaces, pedestrian accessibility, attractively designed private and civic buildings and a rich array of homes, shops and services in every neighborhood. New Urban developments now sell for a premium because of their tremendous appeal—10 to 25 percent over conventional developments of similar size. The Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) most heavily invested in the New Urbanism, Atlanta-based Post Properties, has one of the best-performing project portfolios in the industry. And the walkable and mixed-use design standards of the New Urbanism have been adopted by the federal government's program to reform the way affordable housing is planned and built (the HOPE VI program) and the way government facilities are designed and located.

The New Urbanism is on a roll. And now anyone can read why. In *Suburban Nation*, the authors analyze the pathologies of sprawl and remind us what our communities have

lost in the process. They describe how sprawl resulted from a dysfunctional confluence of transportation, tax, lending, building and housing policies and how their consequences changed attitudes and behavior patterns. As such, alternatives to sprawl will require a similar coordination of more thoughtful design, planning, incentives, standards and policies—no easy task.

Fortunately, the clear and lively prose of *Suburban Nation* makes this complex web of issues eminently accessible. Readers will find not only a compelling conceptual framework for change but also numerous practical examples and recommendations, including the Eight Steps of Regional Planning; policy suggestions for every level of government, architects and citizens; the Two Forgotten Rules about Affordable Housing; and the Tradition Neighborhood Development Checklist; to name a few.

What particularly intrigued me was a section on smart growth called "The Victory Myth" in which the authors caution against believing that "we've won." While it's true that opinion leaders and public officials have learned to espouse the virtues of smarter growth—even if they can't quite define it, the reality is that sprawl continues to be the dominant pattern of development today. In all likelihood, decades will pass before the purpose and practice of more responsible growth becomes mainstream. But with seminal texts like *Suburban Nation*, we now have a better sense of how to get there.

Suburban Nation, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, 2000. North Point Press (290 pg, \$30)

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As you know, the electronic bulletin *Transfer*, the newsletter *Progress*, and most of STPP's publications and other services are offered free of charge. We are not a membership organization. However, we do rely on individual donations to help us provide these services. We have now made it easy to make a tax-deductible donation to STPP, through a secure link on our website. By clicking on the "Support Us!" button on our home page (www.transact.org), you can now make a credit card donation through a secure server. Please consider a donation to help STPP continue its work. This service is being provided in cooperation with the Environmental News Network (<http://www.enn.com>).



STPP Seeks Assistant Director

STPP is seeking an Assistant Director for Policy and Programs to manage a variety of activities for its Washington, DC office, including program management, policy development and fundraising. Candidates should have at least 8 years of professional experience in a field related to transportation, the environment, community organizing and/or organizational management. Interested persons should forward a cover letter, resume, writing sample and salary history/requirements to the address listed below. For more information, visit <http://www.transact.org>.

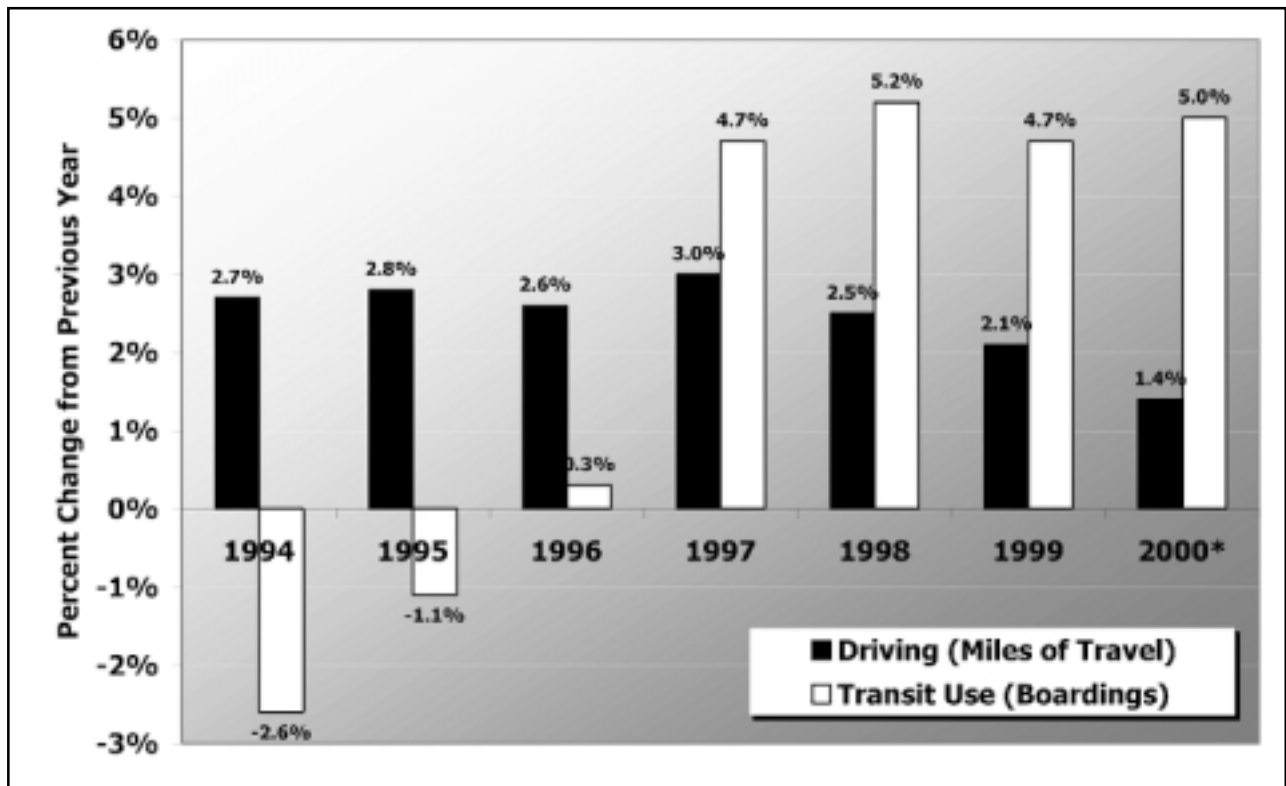
Roy Kienitz, Executive Director
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Attention: Job Search

FAX: 202.466.2247

Up With Transit!

Growth in Public Transit Use Exceeds Growth in Driving

For over three years now, use of public transit has been booming. Total transit use grew 15.3 percent over this period, from 7.9 billion boardings in 1996 to almost 9.1 billion in 1999.¹ Since 1996, transit use has grown at almost double the rate of driving; total vehicle miles of travel grew by just 7.8 percent.² As the figure below shows, since 1997 transit boardings have grown by close to five percent per year, while growth in miles driven slowed each year. In 1999, transit ridership reached the highest level since 1960. The latest results available, for the first quarter of the year 2000, show this trend continuing. Ridership was up 4.8 percent over the same period in the previous year.



*Figures for 2000 are based on partial data for that year. Driving figures are for the first 6 months of the year; see *Traffic Volume Trends*, May 2000, Federal Highway Administration. For details, see <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/tvtw/tvtpage.htm>. Transit figures are for the first 6 months of the year, as reported by the nation's transit agencies to the American Public Transportation Association. For details, see <http://www.apta.com/stats/ridershp/index.htm>

Ridership is increasing on all forms of transit, including buses, subway systems, commuter trains and trolleys. And growth in the first quarter of 2000 was strong throughout the U.S. Bus systems with strong growth in ridership included Fort Myers, FL (up 20.4 percent), Grand Rapids, MI (up 11.5 percent), Phoenix, AZ (up 10.6 percent) and Salt Lake City, UT (up 20.9 percent). Train systems with strong ridership growth included BART in San Francisco (up 15.6 percent), New York City's subways (up 8.8 percent) and the Washington, DC Metro (up 8.5 percent.)

This strong reversal of past trends reflects Americans' changing attitudes. People are voting with their feet, and increasingly they are voting for transit.

Notes

1. Source: American Public Transportation Association. For more information see their website at <http://www.apta.com>
2. Source: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). FHWA estimates that total vehicle miles of travel grew from 2.48 trillion miles in 1996 to 2.68 trillion miles in 1999. For more information go to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov>

Campaign Connection

Tell Us What's Happening in Your Region!

Campaign Connection is a look at transportation and land use reform around the country. To share news developments happening in your region, contact STPP!

California

California Governor Gray Davis signed several livable community bills this September that will increase funds for bicycle and pedestrian projects and encourage smart growth planning. The smart growth bill encourages regional agencies to consider alternative growth and transportation scenarios as part of their twenty-year plans. Although the legislative mandate was removed from the original bill at the last minute, local advocates believe that the legislation may become mandatory if funding can be secured in next year's state budget. Other bills will increase state spending for bicycle improvements to \$7.2 million a year for the next five fiscal years and fund an additional \$8 million in pedestrian and traffic-safety projects.

California distributed the first round of Safe Routes to School funds this September, providing \$20 million in competitive grants for safety projects around schools. To bring attention to the program and the then-pending legislation, STPP's California offices released a study in September called "Dangerous by Design: Pedestrian Safety in California."

For more information on California news, sign up for STPP's *California Transportation Report* via jcorless@transact.org.

Michigan

In this new millenium, faith is driving statewide transportation reform efforts in Michigan. And while many transportation activists may think they're relying on faith these days, Michigan activists really mean it. Last year, several faith-based community groups joined the Michigan Transportation and Land Use Coalition (M-TLC) to press the state legislature for more public transit funding, a fix-it-first road program, and greater citizen involvement in transportation planning.

In Detroit, MOSES (Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength), a coalition of congregations in southeast Michigan, is leading the way in churches and synagogues by spreading the message of transit investment being a "moral issue," and their call is compelling. The state Department of Transportation is pouring money into new and wider highways in a region where one-third of Detroit households do not own a car. With its exceptional organizing ability in Detroit, MOSES joined the Coalition to amplify its voice across Michigan and in the state capitol.

Likewise, another M-TLC member group, Faith in Motion of in Grand Rapids, Michigan's second largest city, reaches out to the religious community to achieve its social goals. Among its successes, last spring, Faith in Motion helped direct a successful campaign to raise local property taxes to support transit. Why did this resonate with people sitting in pews? In part because Grand Rapids lacked bus service on Sundays. The vote passed with 65% approval and Sunday service is just beginning!

The Coalition is run by the Michigan Land Use Institute and includes transit agencies, disabled-rights advocates, and environmental groups. For more information, contact Kelly Thayer at trans@mlui.org, or visit <http://www.mlui.org>.

New Mexico

This October, New Mexico advocates launched a new statewide coalition in conjunction with the rollout of Smart Growth America. The New Mexico Coalition for a Livable Future will focus their efforts on improving transportation policy, the enforcibility of planning laws, and the connection between schools and growth. Transportation priorities for the upcoming January legislative session include advocating for statewide legislation on Safe Routes to School and flexibility in highway design. The coalition is also supporting an increase in state assistance for rural transit projects—currently capped at \$50,000 a year, as well as legislation to require consistency and accountability in planning. Members include the 1000 Friends of New Mexico, the Great American Station Foundation, the New Mexico Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the New Mexico Conference of Churches.

In other state news, the City of Albuquerque has rewritten its comprehensive plan to include a "Centers and Corridors" amendment that will direct growth along transit corridors. The Middle Rio Grande Council is currently identifying areas for potential high-capacity light rail in Bernalillo County. The corridors will be considered as an alternative to proposed looproads. Downtown revitalization plans are also underway in Albuquerque, including the location of new development near the city's Amtrak and Greyhound transportation hub.

For more information on the new statewide coalition, contact Lehua Lopez-Mau at 505.848.823206.

STPP Regional Offices

STPP now has three California offices working to ensure sound transportation investment in the Golden State:

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Rhode Island

Like most states, Rhode Island has witnessed sprawling development become the norm throughout its small villages, towns, and cities. In an effort to take control of sprawl and the bad transportation investments that fuel it, the Sierra Club's Rhode Island Chapter has partnered with several coalitions across the state including *Why Drive?*, a new mass transit users coalition working for more transportation choices throughout the densely populated state.

Last August, the Sierra Club-RI also helped bring together a diverse coalition of groups called **Save Our State** that successfully defeated the first round of proposals for a port at Quonset Point last year. Advocates are opposed to the proposal to redevelop the former naval base into a large container port because of the adverse environmental impacts it would have on Narragansett Bay and because the increase in truck traffic will worsen air and noise pollution in the region. Despite these findings, the RI Economic Development Corporation released a \$350,000 feasibility study this August arguing for a higher-capacity port that will be partly financed by public dollars. The Sierra Club is calling for the state to conduct a feasibility study of equal cost to review alternatives to the port such as redeveloping the brownfields site into a research and technology park or a waterfront business park, or exploring recreational uses that are compatible with nearby Newport's tourist economy.

The port proposal is tied to another controversial transportation project supported by the EDC—the Quonset Access Freeway. Despite widespread opposition by a coalition of RI environmental organizations including the Sierra Club, construction on the four-mile freeway leading to the proposed port recently began this August a month and a half earlier than planned. Taxpayers for Common Sense and Friends of the Earth found that the freeway will cost an additional \$52 million in their 1999 "Road to Ruin" report.

For more information, contact Alicia Karpick at the Sierra Club-RI at alicia.karpick@sierraclub.org.

Utah

Salt Lake City pedestrians can feel safer crossing the street, thanks to Mayor Rocky Anderson's new safety initiatives. After learning that Salt Lake City was rated the 12th worst metro area for pedestrian danger by STPP's *Mean Streets 2000* report, Mayor Anderson promised to never let his city receive that dubious distinction again. Among other things, the pedestrian safety initiative includes making bright orange flags available to pedestrians at busy intersections to increase their visibility to motorists.

Transit riders in Salt Lake City have made the city's light rail line one of the most successful in the country since the TRAX system began service last December. In addition to opening TRAX a year ahead of schedule and under budget, the Utah Transit Authority reported that ridership exceeded projections during the first four months of operation. A recent survey of TRAX riders also revealed that 45 percent were new to transit.

The success and popularity of TRAX prompted local elected officials to propose a referendum to improve and expand the regional transit system. On November 7, citizens of Salt Lake, Davis and Weber Counties in Utah will have the opportunity to vote on Measure #1, a measure designed to improve the public transportation service in those three counties through a quarter-cent sales tax increase for transit projects. The proposed transportation improvements include building five new light rail spurs to complement the two existing lines in Salt Lake County, construction of a high-speed commuter rail line running from Salt Lake City to Ogden, purchasing 300 new buses and adding bus service on Sundays, holidays and evenings.

To learn more about Salt Lake City's pedestrian safety initiatives, contact Nina Dougherty with the Sierra Club's Utah Chapter at 801.467.9297. For additional information about Measure #1, contact Charlie Luke with People for Sensible Transportation at votemeasure1@yahoo.com.

Special thanks to Kelly Thayer, Alicia Karpick and Charlie Luke for contributing to Michigan, Rhode Island and Utah articles.

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The goal of Surface Transportation Policy Project is to ensure that transportation policy and investments help conserve energy, protect environmental and aesthetic quality, strengthen the economy, promote social equity, and make communities more livable. We emphasize the needs of people, rather than vehicles, in assuring access to jobs, services, and recreational opportunities.

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